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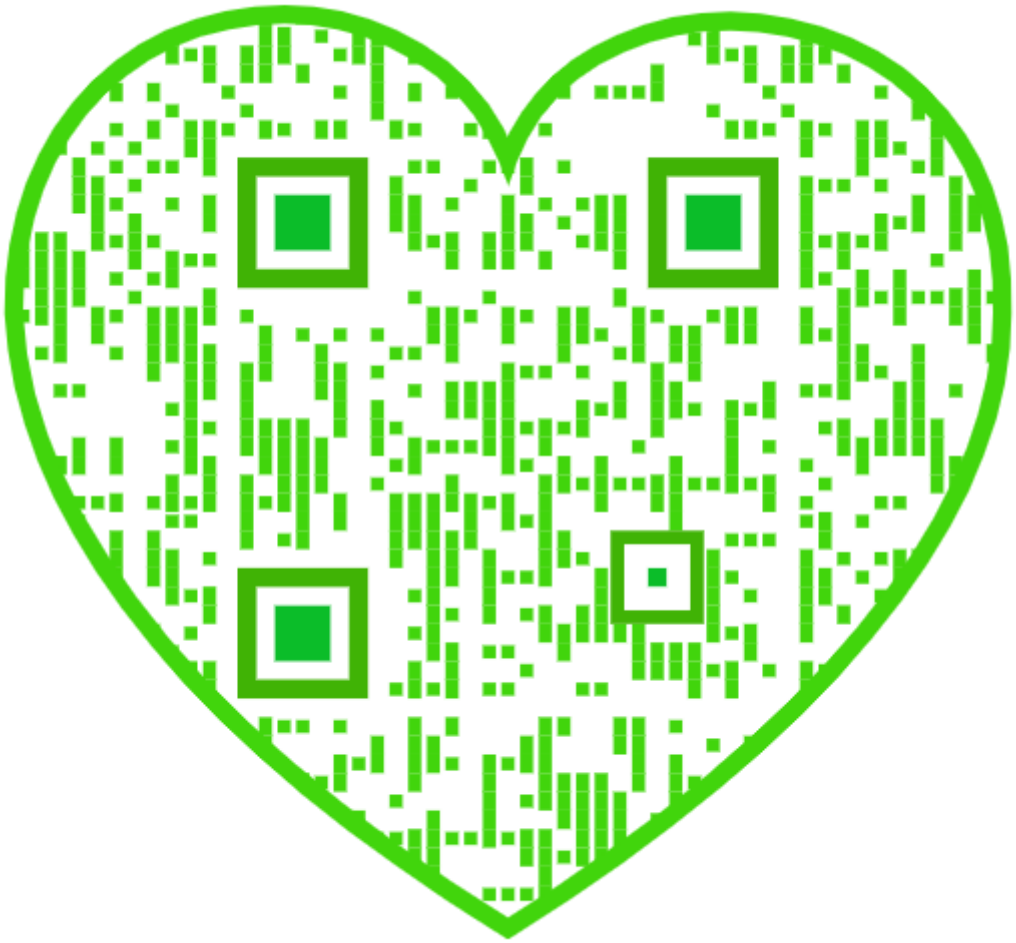

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A MONOGRAPH

ON

WOOD CARVING

IN THE

UNITED PROVINCES OF AGRA AND OUDH.

By J. L. MAFFEY, I.C.S.

GOVT. OF U.P.

ALLAHABAD:
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CHAPTER I.

"THE arts of India are the illustration of the religious life of the Hindus, as that life was already organized in full perfection "under the Code of Manu, B. C. 900—300 . . . . . Every detail of "Indian decoration has a religious meaning, and the arts of India will "never be rightly understood until these are brought to their study, not "only the sensibility which can appreciate them at first sight, but a "familiar acquaintance with the character and subjects of the religious "poetry, national legends, and mythological scriptures that have always "been their inspiration and of which they are the perfected imagery." By this statement Sir George Birdwood commits himself to the opinion that Indian art means Hindu art, and that none but Pandits are competent to comprehend and expound its canons: in short, that as far as Indian art is concerned, Greek, Scythian, Arab, Pathán, Persian, and Mughal might never have existed.

This unfortunate contention has been subjected to many criticisms, and those who are inclined to side with the critics in maintaining that the traditionary arts of India have been greatly influenced by foreign ideas will find no better refutation of Sir George Birdwood's theory than the state of the arts, and notably of wood-carving, in the United Provinces.

Lying in the path of Muhammadan invasion and close to the centre of the Mughal dominion, the United Provinces and the Panjáb felt the full effects of conquest. Partly owing to the force of example and partly to the system of vexatious Hindu ordinances, the traditional principles of Hindu art lost their hold on the inhabitants. The result is specially noticeable in wood-carving, sculpture, and architecture. To find characteristic Hindu work it is necessary to go further afield to regions where indigenous art was safeguarded by geographical conditions—to Nepál or Southern India.

There is no possibility of confounding characteristic Hindu and Muhammadan work. The former, like Burmese work, is marked by grotesque and extravagant fantasy: the latter by a cold and geometric severity. The canons of Muhammadan art forbid the portrayal of human forms and of most animals. The Hindu worker, on the other hand, delights in a profuse entanglement of monstrous and unnatural figures.

The fact that much wood-carving is architectural in character supplies other useful indications. The pointed arch *(mehráb)*, the minaret, and the rounded pillar are Muhammadan characteristics. Square pillars, trabeated arches, and brackets are features of Hindu design.

In Muhammadan wood-carving the place of fantastic Hindu ornamentation is filled by a free use of geometric diapers; and whereas Hindu work is as a rule deeply undercut, Muhammadan work is marked by flatness of relief.

If these data be applied to the wood-carving of these Provinces, it becomes apparent that the work is predominantly Muhammadan in character. Hindu traditions, however, did not yield without a struggle, but inspired in the conquerors a taste for rich surface ornament and induced a greater latitude with regard to the carving of animal forms. To gratify a Hindu patron a Muhammadan *mistri* will readily accommodate himself to Hindu prejudices and carve the figure of Ganesh over the lintel of a door. In this part of India, Ganesh, the wise elephant-headed god, is the only figure commonly seen on carved doors; so far have the Hindu *barhais* renounced their traditions.

Sir George Birdwood writes:—"In India, the Rámayána and Mahábhárata, Ráma and Síta, Hanumán and Rávana, Vishnu and the Garuda, Krishna and Rádha, and the Kauravas and Pandavas are everywhere in sculptured stone about the temples and on the carved woodwork of houses."

True as this undoubtedly is of Bombay and Southern India, it conveys a false impression with regard to the general features of

architectural decoration in the Panjáb and the United Provinces. So deep has Muhammadan influence sunk that even in Ajodhya, the birthplace of Ram Chandra, the carved wood-work presents no image of the ever-popular hero with his bow. Carved portraits of other divinities undoubtedly occur here and there in Ajodhya. For instance there is a carved *chaukat* in the Mahárája's palace which contains no less than eight figures. But each god is placed in a separate niche *(táq)*, and the general design of the door is based on the *mehráb* and is pure Muhammadan, even to the extent of including the Royal Fish, the symbol of the old Nawábs.

As a rule very little wood-carving is found in the interior of Hindu temples. Images and sacred objects of wood could not resist the wear and tear which *puja* involves, nor would they be a suitable subject for the paint which is so liberally scattered on festive occasions The temples of Benares, however, contain big wooden images of Siva and also a good deal of very characteristic Nepálese wood-carving, the presence of which is due to the fact that Hindu pilgrims flock in great numbers to Benares from Nepál and are great supporters of Siva's shrines.

CHAPTER II.

Decline of Wood-Carving.

"WESTERN ideas" are the bane of Indian art. Apparently it is impossible for a native of India to imbibe English education without losing his admiration for the indigenous arts of his country. Accordingly those arts are either being ruined by neglect or vitiated by the demand for unsuitable imitations. A Government must necessarily have prestige. It is unfortunate that the indirect effects should be so deplorable.

No craft has suffered more than wood-carving. Formerly the nobility and well-to-do citizens took delight in embellishing their houses

with carved verandahs and balconies. All the chief entrances were filled with massive carved doors. In this class of work the Indian wood-carver is seen at his best. The craftsmen were retained by their employer in a sort of feudal relation. They lived and worked in the verandah of his house and received a regular salary; there was no hope of large profit, but they had a genuine enthusiasm for their art. The philosophic Hindu could demand nothing better than to spend his days free from care in the gradual perfecting of a masterpiece of carving, to be set up in his native place, where his handiwork would be a source of credit during life and a monument after death. Working under such conditions, the Indian craftsman has no equal.

Unfortunately the upper and moneyed classes had no real intelligent enthusiasm for art. They saw that the style of building erected by Government bore no resemblance to the designs of their *mistris.* Failing to realize that the simplicity and uniformity of official buildings resulted from considerations of economy and convenience, the well-to-do classes are abandoning the old traditions and clamour for "European plainness."

The late Mr. Growse once endeavoured to convince a native gentleman of the folly of this unreasonable craze, and referred to certain buildings in the best native style, the erection of which he himself had superintended. He received the following answer :—"The works which "are carried out under your direction, however pleasing in themselves, "have the one fatal drawback—that they are not stamped with official "approval. Nothing in the same style is ever undertaken by Gov-"ernment. The trading classes do well to adhere to Hindustáni types ; "but the landed gentry prefer to range themselves with their rulers, "and thus to emphasize their distinction from the vulgar."

Thus, through being the object of the most sincere form of flattery, the English rule has caused the country to be sprinkled with plain, unlovely doorways and balconies, and has turned the *mistri* out of the verandah.

The history of wood-carving in the last thirty years is nowhere more plainly written than in the streets of Pilibhít. Evidently the city was formerly a great centre of wood-carving. The bazaar is a long succession of carved doors and pillars, many being of the most delicate workmanship. Yet, although carpenters still constitute a large percentage of the population, only one old carpenter could be found who is prepared to execute an order for carving.

There is no longer any demand for "*bárik kám*," and the *barhais* have ceased teaching their children how to carve. In the old days the child sat by his father and was made to draw simple designs and practise the use of the carvers' chisel *(chaursi)* on a piece of waste board. Thus he acquired a certain skill in carving and design before he knew how to handle a common saw. This custom is fast dying out throughout India, and the hereditary skill accumulated through countless generations is running to waste. In Lower Bengal the end has already come, and wood-carving is practically extinct.

It might perhaps be argued that English influence has compensated the wood-carvers for the loss of their former importance. Instead of labouring for small wages in the verandah of a native zamíndár or mahájan, he may now apply his skill in another direction by carving European articles *de luxe*, for which there is a considerable demand. Hence the *kárkhánas* of Hoshiárpur and Jullundur in the Panjáb, and Nagína and Saháranpur in the United Provinces. The total number of workmen employed in this special trade is small, but the rate of profit is high.

Unfortunately the wood-carving craft had no traditions in the matter of carving articles *de luxe*. Very little furniture is to be found in the mansion of an old-fashioned native.

With the introduction of European models there inevitably came a vitiation of design. The Kashmir shawl trade was "poisoned" in the same way by agents sent out by French firms. The Indian craftsman is a master of design, and if only left to himself he will apply the rules of his craft with unerring taste to any new object. Once persuaded to abandon

his "*qaida*" he rapidly deteriorates, and his work loses its spontaneity. The result is a series of inanities which have neither invention, variety nor charm.

There can be little doubt that one of the chief factors in the excellence of the old *mistris*' work lay in the non-economic way in which they regarded their task. Probability of enough remuneration to enable them to keep themselves and their families in comfort was enough to inspire them to produce work of the highest order. The prospect of making money beyond this limit did not stimulate them to increased exertion. There is an article in the *Indian Art Journal* by Mr. Baden-Powell, dealing with the apathy of Panjáb brass-workers and their unwillingness to avail themselves of his advice, thus renouncing the possibility of a lucrative business. A traveller who visited the Panjáb Exhibition remarked that apparently the only way to get native workmen to do anything was to shut them up in jails!

This curious indifference serves its purpose, and it is best to indulge the workman to the top of his bent.

"All over the East it is the same—'*farda*' drawls the Cairene workman just as readily as his Indian brother says '*kal.*'" And when this apathy is overcome, there is another difficulty to be feared. Having become awake at last to the possibility of doing a fine trade in some class of work, the workmen turn out piece after piece in such a hurry to get money, that the articles—most of them copies of copies to begin with—have all the defects of the first copy gradually magnified, and the ornamentation grows so poor that the demand falls off, both character and technical merit being lost.

Saháranpur, once celebrated for architectural wood-carving, shows in its modern *tún* work a striking example of this fatal tendency. Very few articles of real artistic merit are turned out by the *kárkhánas* in their haste to meet the demand.

"Made to sell" is plainly stamped on most of their productions. However, the objects displayed for sale on the railway stations are

eagerly bought by tourists. It is questionable how long they last to gladden the eyes of their purchaser, as the wood itself is *kachcha* and the joining execrable.

Every kind of labour-saving appliance is welcomed and adopted in these *kárkhánas*. In the bazaar you may hear the hum of many fret-work machines: by means of these abominations a heap of *tún*-wood boards is soon converted into a stack of *jáli* work. Each board is afterwards sawn up lengthwise into several thin planks. Hence the unfailing symmetry of Saháranpur work! The curve of the leaves in floreated patterns is produced by the simple expedient of hammering each *patta* with a curved, oval-shaped punch.

For the better class of articles, the work of the machine is supplemented by hand carving, and it cannot be denied that the result is often graceful and pleasing. But the greater part of Saháranpur work is not "wood-carving" in the true sense, and is unworthy of the craft which fashioned the temple-doors of Northern India.

CHAPTER III.

The Wood-Carver.

THE strict Hindu loves to regard caste as a rigid and iron-bound institution which has never shifted since its foundation lines were cast in the Vedas. This theory receives no support from history, and the composition of the "functionary" castes shows conclusively that the caste system of the Hindu is essentially elastic. Necessity knows no law of caste. If society is to exist at all, certain work must be done and certain industries carried on.

No better instance of a composite functionary caste could be found than the *barhai* or carpenter class, which includes Bráhmans and Rájputs as well as Chamárs. Traditionally *barhais* claim descent from Viswakarma, son of Brahma; but the numerous sub-divisions show that the only real tie is that of a common occupation. Those who follow the

occupation of carpentry fall naturally into two classes—the village *barhai* and the city *barhai.*

The former is one of the recognised village menials, and in return for certain dues of grain he is bound to work from May to November at the task of keeping the village stock of agricultural implements in good order. For the remaining five months of the year he is at liberty to work how and for whom he pleases.

The city carpenter is a free and independent agent. He has advanced from "Status to Contract", and conducts his business and manages his *kárkhána* on whatever lines he approves.

The craft of wood-carving is not limited to either one of these two classes. The village *barhai* has no higher ambition than to spend his spare months in the decoration of some rich zamíndár's house, and the city man is ready to execute or superintend any similar work which may be entrusted to him.

Of late years, however, disappointment has too frequently been the lot of the village wood-carver, and the city carpenter has begun to specialize in his industry. Owing to the fast-diminishing demand for "*bárik kám,*" universal facility has ceased to be a characteristic of either the city or the village *barhai.* Had wood-carvers originally formed a separate craft, their lot would have been hard indeed!

Curiously enough, the very conditions which induced decline also caused wood-carving to become a distinct craft. The men who carve knick-knacks for the European market have cut themselves off from ordinary carpentry, and the younger of them are incapable of repairing a *gári* or setting up a plain door. Thus a curious state of things, utterly out of keeping with the old traditions, is gradually coming into existence. The *rehlus* makers of Pilibhít cannot execute the simplest order for carving, while the carvers of Nagína and Saháranpur have no acquaintance with ordinary carpentry *(mota kám).*

One result of this is the bad joining noticeable in most carving. Lack of finish is no doubt typical of Indian work in general; but the

wood-carvers are specially notorious for their tendency to "spoil the ship for a ha'p'orth of tar".

It would be difficult to eliminate this defect from the cheap goods which are turned out, piece after piece, to satisfy the globe-trotters' craving for a memento of "India." In work specially executed to order, a little supervision will have a salutary effect. If the purchaser is not prepared to take this trouble, he must not be surprised at finding the most delicate piece of carving disfigured by gaping joints and unstable supports.

In spite of the many evil influences referred to, there are still plenty of good wood-carvers left in these Provinces, though only a small proportion of them find that kind of employment for which they are adapted by taste and ability.

Some have surrendered themselves to the baneful influences of the wood-carving *kárkhánas:* others have ceased to exercise their inherited skill and will be found in Railway Workshops or engaged in ordinary carpentry: others—most fortunate and least numerous of all—are to be found in private European or native employ, where they can work after the manner of their forefathers.

The wood-carver, trained to his work from his earliest years, develops a delicacy of touch combined with a sureness and quickness of hand, which renders his handling of the chisel a unique and most attractive spectacle.

Carving an involved floreated pattern, with no design before him, he will manipulate his chisel with swift and unerring accuracy and leave his background or "*tihi zamín*" as smooth as a well-planed surface.

No European workshops can show a phenomenon more striking than the cunning of the Indian wood-carver. It is a gift he has acquired by careful training and daily practice, enhanced perhaps by the power of heredity,—by the fact that his ancestors have wielded the same tools through countless generations.

CHAPTER IV.

Design.

THE class of design indigenous to these Provinces is, as we have seen, a harmonious blending of the Hindu and Muhammadan styles, in which the latter predominates.

The Deputy Commissioner of Fyzabad writes:—"The great char-"acteristic of Indian wood-carving as distinct from other countries' "carving is that India leaves no space uncovered. There is never an "effect of a bold ornament or a small design in relief in the midst of a "smooth space,—an effect very noticeable in Chinese and Japanese work, "and occurring also in English work."

"Nor does the domestic Hindu carving use the art so dear to the "Japanese of a design cut right through. It thus loses the effect of "light shining through from behind. The characteristic of leaving no "space uncarved is typically Indian. "*Isko kyon chhor diya*"? says the "employer, so the workman drives in the chisel."

The prevalence of this latter characteristic marks the one great triumph of Hindu extravagance over the severe style natural to Muhammadan work. The spirit which, in the familiar work of Tanjore, Nepál, and Burma, finds vent in a tangled mass of monstrous Swamy figures here bears the stamp of Muhammadan prejudices, and expresses itself in a rich surface design of arabesques and floreated or geometric patterns.

This clashing of influences did not lead to chaos. A strict code of rules was speedily evolved, based on the great masterpieces of Dehli and Agra. This code is still faithfully adhered to by *mistris* of the old stamp, who show evident reluctance to execute a design which entails a breach of their "*qaida*."

This *qaida* still holds the allegiance of most of the Panjáb *kárkhánas*: its adherents in these Provinces are rapidly diminishing. Wherever *kárkhánas* devote themselves to supplying the European market, their methods of design become hopelessly confused. Indigenous and foreign patterns are not kept apart. To ensure rapid outturn the same designs

are repeated with monotonous regularity, and faults become accentuated through constant reproduction.

The strict code of design naturally has proper system of nomenclature attached to it. This is rapidly becoming a dead language among the new-fashioned *mistris*. In Saháranpur each *kárkhána* has its own system. New names have come into use, and old names, are borrowed indiscriminately for new and mongrel patterns.

There is, for example, an intricate and intertwined ornamental design, well-known and very commonly used in the Panjáb, known as "*Akbari*."

This name is found to exist in most of the Saháranpur *kárkhánas*; but in each case it is applied quite arbitrarily to designs which not only bear no resemblance to the genuine *Akbari*, but also vary in the different shops.

Only in the simple names given to ordinary figures of geometric design does uniformity exist, *e.g. chhawans, dasawans, barahwans.*

Architectural wood-carving, being essentially Indian, was not subjected to the same direct foreign influence as knick-knacks and articles suitable for exportation, and has managed to maintain its purity in spite of decline.

The best known and most typical features of architectural carving are the door-frame (or *chaukat*) and the balcony or *bukhárcha*. Illustrations are given in the Appendix showing the names by which the essential parts are generally known to the *mistris* of these Provinces.

In India the most common form of door is composed of two leaves (*jori kiwár*) which do not hang on hinges, but turn on pivots above and below. The junction of the door is covered by a projecting parting bead known as the "*bini*".

Overhead the door is surmounted either by the Hindu trabeated arch or by the Muhammadan *mehráb*. Compromise between the two forms is very common, and results in the formation of two spandrels or *katefas* (shoulder-blades) in the space between the rectangular and the rounded arch.

The *mehráb* occurs in a great number of varieties, and the proportions of each are subject to stringent rule.

The broadest classification is based on the number of curves *(churi)* into which the *mehráb* is divided.

This distinction gives rise to the more familiar varieties known as *goldár, simargola, saurahi, peshtakh,* and *nalshatiri.*

The manifold floral and geometric designs employed to decorate the various pillars *(situn)* into which the door-jambs are sub-divided, all bear distinctive names. Thus a floral pattern which appears to wind up the *situn* is known as *ainthe-ki-bel.* Most common of all is the flat *badrum* or *bandrum* pattern, consisting of symetrically curving lines. Some names express their meaning clearly enough. A line of overlapping scales is known as *machhli: dánadár* is a dotted, geometric pattern: a design consisting of curling leaves is called *motidár,* from the resemblance of each *patta* to a closed fist. A *situn* which is separated into lengths, like the turned leg of a chair, is known as "*gola*".

The design of the cartouches *(dilla)* set in the panels, is usually geometric. In most doors of Hindu origin the central panel of the lintel is consecrated to Ganesh. Owing to Muhammadan influence the figures of Hindu gods are very rarely worked into the general design—as in Burmese or Madras work—but, when they occur, occupy special niches in the jambs or lintel.

The *phulmekh* or metal studs, which are used with such striking effect in most carved doors, are probably a survival of the spikes used in less peaceful times as a protection against the charge of war-elephants.

CHAPTER V.

Implements and Material.

THE implements of the wood-carver, like those of most Indian artisans are few and simple. A mallet—usually a plain block of wood—and a dozen small chisels will suffice for all purposes.

Chisels are generally called *nihání:* though *rukhni* (Mainpuri) and *qalam* (Nagína) are terms in common use.

They fall into two main classes, *viz.* the flat V chisels known as *chaursi;* and those with a bent rounded head, used in carving floreated patterns, called *birka.* Each class is sub-divided according to sizes, the dimensions of the different chisels corresponding with the breadth of the thumb and finger-nails.

In Nagína *birka* chisels are called *gol qalam.* The *thassa* is a minute gouge employed in decorating the background. *Derhkhamman* and *ultians* are two forms of *birka.*

In the *Brihat Sanhita,* a celebrated work on astronomy dating from the sixth century A. D., a list is given of the kinds of wood most esteemed by Hindus for furniture. Sál, sandalwood, and teak are mentioned, but *tún* and *shisham,* which are used so generally nowadays, are not included.

Similarly, there is a curious collection of forgotten lore in the Silpa Sastra and the Puranas, which imposes certain rules in the selection and felling of trees. According to this ancient philosophy, the timber of trees which have been struck by lightning or borne down by inundations, storms or elephants, or which have fallen towards the south quarter, or which grow on burial-grounds should not be used by carpenters. The business of the modern timber-merchant is not hampered by any such scruples. A few curious superstitions still exist.

Sandalwood *(chandan)* is an object of great veneration, and is used extensively for religious purposes. Its paste is used for caste-marks and for anointing the household gods, and Hindu poets compare it to a saint:—"*Chandana sangati chanachi hoti.*" The use of *chandan* is much approved by the carpenters of Nagína as a fragrant lining for carved ebony caskets.

The wood of the *siris (Acacia speciosa)* is also much esteemed, and it is regarded as inauspicious to use it any way that may cause it to be trodden under foot. Accordingly, it is unsuitable for pattens *(kharauns);*

and though there is no objection to using it in the door-lintel *(utrangi)*, the sill *(dihal* or *dihli)* should never be made of it.

The wood *par excellence* for all kinds of carving is *shisham (Dalbergia sissoo)*, which flourishes universally in the plains as well as on the lower ranges of the Himálayas. The dark heart-wood is of great durability and is not readily attacked by whiteants. When darkened with oil or a composition of soot, it is not easily distinguished from *sál (Shorea robusta)*, a timber much used in these Provinces for the cheaper kind of *chaukats*. The latter wood is, however, inferior to *shisham*, as it is coarse-grained and less durable.

Cedrela toona or *tún* is the staple timber of cabinet-makers, notably in the Saháranpur district. This wood is soft and easily worked, and takes a natural dull-red polish.

Dudhi (Holarrhena antidysenterich), another speciality of Saháranpur, is not so well known as formerly. The tree is found in the Sewálik tract and yields a white soft wood, very easily chiselled. Plaques and picture-frames of *dudhi* wood were formerly turned out in great quantities, but have now lost favour owing to their tendency to rapid discoloration.

Owing to its high price the hard-grained, durable, and fragrant sandalwood is used only for small articles. The Nagína carvers are fond of using it in combination with their so-called "ebony" *(abnus)*: the latter *(Diospyros tomentosa)* is a black and heavy heart-wood imported from Central India.

Teak or *sagon (Tectona grandis)* is used in the central jails by Burmese prisoners, and their work is as readily identified by the pale unpolished nature of the wood as by the well-known characteristics of the carving.

CHAPTER VI.

Local distribution of Wood-Carving.

MOST of the requests for information despatched to the various districts elicited the laconic reply, "No wood-carving here."

Probably there are bazaars in every district possessing good carved *chaukats* and verandahs; but this does not prove that wood-carving was ever a local industry. Wood-carvers are freer agents than most members of the community and will go far afield to get work. A great deal of the carving found in the Southern districts was done by men imported from the carving centres of the North, and the Rohilkhand would still be capable of maintaining this tradition if the old taste in house-decoration revived.

MEERUT DIVISION.

Reference has already been made to the many shortcomings of the best known class of Saháranpur carving, namely, the cheap articles of fretted *tún*-wood, such as are sold on railway-station platforms. The industry possesses small claim to the title of "carving" and has few Indian characteristics. What carving there is on trays, screen-borders, &c., is poor and superficial and of nondescript design. In fact, the industry is quite modern, having sprung up in the last generation; the chief cause of its prosperity being the fact that it provides tourists with convenient and portable mementos. The articles in question will have to fetch higher prices before the expenditure of more time and trouble in their manufacture will be profitable.

The same *kárkhánas* which turn out these articles for the general market are also capable of doing really artistic and delicate work for a customer who will pay a high price and take some trouble over the details of his purchase.

Graceful and well-finished *átishkhánas*, screens, and tables from Saháranpur are a feature of many drawing-rooms. Both *shisham* and *tún* lend themselves to minute and intricate *jáli* work, and the effect is greatly enhanced by the natural beauty of the polished wood.

However, even in the best class of work there is little that can be called carving. A superficial, floreated pattern embellishes the narrow strips of surface which are of necessity left unfretted, and even this, in the case of the softer *tún* wood, is done largely by the aid of a leaf-shaped punch.

The thin panels of fretwork are sawn from a plank previously fretted by machine. In this way one passage of the machine fret-saw is actually doing five or six panels of *jáli* work at once. The perfect symmetry which results from these ingenious methods is striking and effective, though hardly a triumph of "art".

The work of the fret-saw is finally touched up with a chisel in order to remove the machine-made effect, and the "carving" is then complete. A photograph of a typical Saháranpur *kárkhána* will be found in the Appendix. Specimens of Saháranpur inlaid work, referred to later, are included in the picture.

Formerly Saháranpur was renowned for the excellence of its carved *chaukats* of *shisham* wood. These were the work of Hindu *mistris*, whereas the modern *jáli* trade is entirely in the hands of Muhammadans. The Hindu wood-carvers have fallen on evil times, and the struggle against adverse conditions has greatly decreased their numbers. Private orders still provide work for the few who remain. Three of them are at present engaged in carving a door which promises to be equal to the best work ever done here. A picture in the Appendix shows them at their work in the verandah of the Saháranpur Town Hall. The door is going on loan to the Delhi Exhibition, and thence to the Lucknow Museum. Those who know the Indian Institute, Oxford, may remember a splendidly-carved door of *shisham* wood which adorned the Persian lecture-room; and this, too, was carved in Saháranpur and was sent to England, after gaining a medal at the Calcutta Exhibition.

A few years ago the *dudhi* carving of Saháranpur was well-known and extensively patronized. This industry is now practically extinct. A few plaques, salvers, and picture-frames—all carved with the *anguri bel* or vine-leaf pattern—are still on sale. The trade deserves no encouragement.

The city of Saháranpur itself does not contain many monuments of good architectural carving. A photograph of the finest piece of carving

in the bazaar is reproduced in the Appendix. It is an old *chaukat*, sadly disfigured by the two unsightly *kiwárs* inserted at a later date.

Quite apart from the inference to be drawn from the presence of Ganesh in the lintel, the door is obviously of Hindu workmanship. The portrayal of human forms in the *baithaks* is sufficient evidence of this; but Muhammadan influence is also clearly traceable in the *mehráb*, in the flat relief of the carving, and in the symmetrical and, for the most part, floral nature of the design. The excellence of the carving is more apparent in the detail of *situn*, *baithak*, and *sáda* given separately in the Appendix.

Pinjra work is not uncommon in the windows and verandahs of the city. It is a kind of geometric lattice-work in which each piece of the wooden frame-work is held in place by a neat system of dowelling and without the aid of glue. This class of work is more common in the Panjáb than in these Provinces. No *pinjra* work is done in Saháranpur now, the existing specimens all being at least thirty years old.

Of other places in the same division, Meerut itself is remarkable for the number of carved doors to be found in the bazaar and elsewhere. Only the older specimens contain workmanship of any merit. The demand for carved doors still exists, but in the case of wood-carving the excellence of the work is strictly proportionate to the price, and Rs. 12 to Rs. 25 seems to be the highest price people are willing to give. The result is that the bazaar and the carpenters' yards are full of cheap carved *chaukats*, nearly all of one uniform and roughly-executed design, and all constructed of badly joined, unseasoned beams. A large proportion of these commonplace *chaukats* are made by village *barhais* and bought up by city contractors.

As a rule every form of Indian art, including wood-carving, is extensively represented at the *Nauchandi* Fair held at the end of the cold weather. Probably owing to the deterrent effect of plague restrictions the fair of 1902 did not attract artisans from so wide an area as

usual and was more local in character. There was no lack of brass and silver ware; but the presence of plague in the Panjáb had a marked effect on the wood-carving booths. The "ebony" carving of Nagína was well represented; but the annual prize was allotted to an easel carved in *shisham* by a Shikárpur *mistri.*

In Shikárpur and Bulandshahr a struggling industry still exists, though the demand is fast approaching vanishing point. Thirty years ago the outlook was almost as gloomy as at present; but by sympathetic treatment Mr. Growse—then Collector of Bulandshahr—brought about an astonishing revival, and twenty years ago Bulandshahr wood-carving was a notable feature of most art exhibitions. After his departure decadence again set in, and the effects of the impulse imported to local industry by his efforts have almost entirely died away. Richly carved doors, ornamented with the brass wire inlay known as Mainpuri work, adorn the Club and Town Hall and are the most striking memento of Mr. Growse's work.

Aligarh is not, and never can have been, a centre of wood-carving. A less pretentious bazaar it is impossible to imagine. Any unusual extravagance expresses itself in the form of stone-carving—a natural effect of the proximity of Muttra and Agra. Out in the district, however, English patronage has developed a school of *mistris* whose work is marked by pure design and admirable execution. Their speciality is carved mantelpieces, and there is at least one specimen in Aligarh which would not suffer from comparison with the best Indian carving. It is of a well-finished native design which harmonises well with the massive arch of dark *shisham* wood.

The uncertain tenure on which most Europeans hold their bungalows, renders the erection of such mantelpieces a somewhat risky investment; but if Government is really anxious to save the wood-carving craft from extinction, the introduction of carved mantelpieces into circuit-houses, messes, official residences, and public buildings would be a step in the right direction, especially as the required form need

not clash with the *mistris'* prejudice in favour of his *qaida*, and would lend itself to the manifold traditional designs which from time immemorial have embellished the rectangular lintel and the carved *mehráb* of the *chaukat*.

The Landour bazaar possesses a reputation for wood-carving to which it has small claim. The articles displayed in the shops and hawked in the verandahs of Mussoorie hotels are not of local manufacture, but are a miscellaneous assortment from Saháranpur, Nagína, Hoshiárpur, Jullundur.

The same is true of Naini Tál. There is no local wood-carving industry, the Paháris confining themselves to plain carpentry. Every season brings an influx of wood-carvers or their agents from the Panjáb, Kashmir, and other parts. Side by side with the inlay work of Hoshiárpur will be found the ebony caskets of Nagína and the fretted *tún* of Saháranpur. Practically no work is done on the spot. A stock of articles is taken up at the opening of the season and replenished as occasion requires.

ROHILKHAND DIVISION.

In this division, as far as wood-carving is concerned, Nagína is an oasis in the desert. One Collector of great experience writes :—"A more inartistic people than the Rohilkhandi I never came across. In their brass-work alone do they show any remnant of the artistic sense."

Art in Moradabad is a monopoly of the brass-workers, and Bareilly confines itself to the manufacture of a species of lacquered furniture, the distinctive feature of which is a decorative varnish laid on so as to represent metallic foliage or tracery on a black or white ground.

Pilibhít is no longer a home of wood-carving, and its carpenters have found a profitable substitute in the building of *rehlus* or light bullock wagons, and by their enterprise have established a considerable export trade.

Mention has already been made of Pilibhít bazaar as a standing example of the present decadent tendencies. The iron verandahs and variegated stone-work of the new-fashioned mansions mingle with the finely-carved doors and balconies of the older houses. One is compelled to admit that, from the point of view of durability, the modern fashion has the advantage. The beauties of wood-carving exposed to the weather are short-lived, and the unremitting energy of the whiteant ensures that the wood itself does not long outlast the carving. Wood-carving, if it is to be appreciated by posterity, must be confined to those parts of a building where it receives some sort of protection. A carved door or window can always be so placed as to be safeguarded against the effects of exposure.

Judging from the appearance of the bazaar, wood-carving must have had a glorious past in Pilibhít. It is said to have been introduced in 1764 by Háfiz Rahmat Khan, who summoned a skilful stone-cutter from Delhi to direct the ornamentation of the Juma Masjid then under construction. In the hands of his pupils the art was extended to wood, a primary cause being the natural abundance of *shisham* wood. On rapid development ensued rapid decadence, and this has been so complete that to-day there is not one carpenter in the bazaar who plies the craft of wood-carving.

The fame of Nagína ebony-work has gone out beyond these Provinces. The familiar pen-boxes, salvers, and walking-sticks are to be met with all over India, and on two occasions Nagína wood-carvers have figured personally in Exhibitions held in London.

In one of the Annual Statistical Reports it is stated that the industry began to develope about two centuries ago, and owed much of its progress to a native of Multán who settled in Nagína. This may or may not be true ; but certainly there is no local record of the fact, nor is there any tradition in the bazaar going back even one century. Native-like, the numerous *dukándárs* invariably assign to their respective grandfathers the honour of having founded the industry.

The point is not of any great importance, as it is certain that the art as it exists to-day is of comparatively recent origin. For some generations the Nagína *lohárs* had been in the habit of making gun-stocks, *chárpái* legs, and *masnads* of ebony and adorning them with a superficial floral carving to suit native taste. Not until about thirty years ago did the industry attract European attention. The Collector of Bijnor was struck by the beauty of the wood and the potentialities of the industry, and gave an order for some carved picture-frames.

From this date steady European demand sprang up; but the comment of Mr. Markham in the Settlement Report, 1874, shows that the standard of artistic merit continued low for some time.

He says the "ebony-carving is pretty, but superficial. It cannot "compare with the black-wood carvings of the Bombay side. Patterns are "much wanted, and instruction in the use of the square. Parallel edges, "correct right angles, a true geometrical figure,—nay, even straight "lines,—are apparently beyond the power of the native workman."

This would not be a fair criticism of Nagína work to-day, and we may draw the gratifying conclusion that the establishment of a European connection does not always ruin an indigenous art-industry! In the case of Nagína the explanation lies in the fact that the work always took the form of kinick-knacks and small articles. By reason of its scarcity and heavy weight the wood is unsuited for other purposes.

Accordingly the European connection caused no revolutionary change of traditional methods. The work continued on its old lines and prospered.

Nagína carving takes the form of a surface decoration of foliage and geometric diapers daintily wrought in crisp relief on trays, caskets, screens, book-covers, and tables. Owing to the extreme hardness of the wood the carving is never deep. It is strictly Muhammadan in character and under-cutting is never practised.

The wood is expensive, the present average price being about Rs. 14 per maund. Consignments of logs are brought to Nagína by

agents from Central India. Considerable discretion is needed in the selection of timber as flaws are not uncommon, and heavy loss is incurred if they pass undetected. To the unpractised eye all the logs appear much alike.

There are five or six big *kárkhánadárs* at Nagína, all Muhammadans. There is no combination among them, and competition is very keen. They objected to the suggestion that a photograph should be taken of a joint collection of their best carvings, on the ground that they never showed each other their wares.

The fret-work machine has found its way to Nagína; but happily the wood-carvers are themselves prejudiced against its use, and do all their best *jáli* work by hand. The machine is used for turning out the cheaper class of goods hawked on railway-stations.

In screens, panels, and book-covers the carving is often combined with an inlay of silver or ivory, which acts as an admirable foil to the darkness of the wood.

LUCKNOW DIVISION.

Apart from some fine specimens of wood-carving in the Industrial Museum and a few old doors in the city temples, Lucknow possesses little interest as far as the present subject is concerned.

It is evident from the royal palaces that the taste of the old Nawábs did not incline towards wood-carving, and the craft must have languished rapidly after the arrival of the court from Fyzabad. There are one or two carpenters capable of doing fine work, and their skill is at present being employed to good purpose on the panels of the staircase and the Council Room ceiling in the new Court of the Judicial Commissioner.

The finely-carved screens in the Chhatar Manzil are of Panjáb workmanship.

In this division Sítápur is the only other district which deserves notice. Carved doors are commonly met with, and there is still a fair demand at low prices. The carving is mostly of simple floral design and not remarkable for delicacy or finish. The wood used is invariably

sál imported either from the Kheri forests or Nepál. It is not a handsome timber, either as regards colour or veining, and it is probably for this reason that carved *chaukats* of *sál* wood are almost always stained black to resemble ebony. To obtain this effect fine soot scraped from *táwas*, in which *chapátis* are cooked, is mixed with mustard-oil and rubbed into the *chaukat*. This process, assisted by subsequent applications of plain oil, eventually produces a jet-black surface.

FYZABAD DIVISION.

It would appear that the Nawábs of Oudh were greater patrons of wood-carving in the pre-Lucknow days, before the court was shifted from Fyzabad. Be that as it may, the Fyzabad district as a whole, certainly possesses a greater proportional share of architectural carvings than the present capital of Oudh. The Royal Fish, the emblem *(mahi muratib)* conferred by the Mughal Emperors on the flower of their nobility, and maintained by the House of Oudh as the crest of royal independence, constantly recurs in the designs, and bears witness to the good relations that subsisted between the court and the artisans.

The wood-carving industry has long since languished in Fyzabad; but there are still a few *mistris* in the district who can do good work when occasion demands.

The *thappa* carving of Tánda is of special interest, and is referred to later.

Bahraich is interesting on account of some carvings in *sál* wood found in the Syed Salár Dargah shrine, and reputed to be several hundred years old. Nowadays the Bahraich carpenters do not practise the art of carving; but some workmen, who were imported from the Panjáb and work in private employ, have earned a wide reputation for their skill.

BENARES DIVISION.

The only carving of note to be found in Benares itself is the Nepálese work in the temples. Nepálese carving possesses many of the familiar characteristics of Burmese work. It is ragged in outline,

grotesque and extravagant in design. The temple carvings at Benares show more ability in workmanship than good taste, being—where figures are introduced—chiefly representations of indelicate subjects. This characteristic is said to be due to the strange Nepálese superstition that carvings of this nature afford protection against lightning.

The lathe—not the chisel—is responsible for the lacquered toys and ornaments of Benares. A similar trade exists in the Mirzapur district, which is also noted for stone-carving.

As regards wood-carving the whole division is practically barren.

AGRA DIVISION.

Agra and Muttra, though justly renowned for stone-carving, contain no sign nor remnant of a local wood-carving industry.

In the Etah district there is a small community of *barhais* who call themselves Bráhmans and wear the *janeo*. Their headquarters are at Marehra, and there they make simple fret-work articles of *shisham, siris,* and *tún* wood. Jewel-boxes with secret drawers and pen-boxes carved out of solid blocks of wood are local specialities, and some of the better class of work is decorated with ivory inlay.

Greater interest attaches to Farrukhabad and Mainpuri.

Fifty years ago Farrukhabad must have numbered a flourishing guild of Muhammadan wood-carvers among its inhabitants, as the bazaar contains many carved verandahs and balconies of pure moresque design. These relics of bygone days, when other tastes prevailed, are for the most part in a very dilapidated condition; and although many features of the modern city mansion are objectionable on æsthetic grounds, it would nevertheless be a matter of surprise if the builder of to-day did not take such striking object-lessons to heart, and endeavour to confer on domestic architecture the hitherto unrecognised merit of durability.

The old guild of wood-carvers is now extinct, and the carpenters of the place—themselves incapable of carving a *chaukat*—confine the education of their children to *mota kám.*

Bárik kám in Farrukhabad is limited to a few Hindu *barhais* who carve blocks for the cloth-printers, and to a few Panjábis who have recently been imported for a similar purpose. This class of work will be discussed separately.

One Hindu workman belonging to an old local family of *barhais* finds regular work in the private employ of Sri Kishun Das. There is a four-leaved shisham-wood screen of his workmanship which for richness of design and delicacy of execution could not be excelled. This screen, a photograph of which is reproduced in the Appendix, is being sent on loan to the Delhi Exhibition. The design is an effective compromise between the Hindu and Muhammadan styles. The central panels are filled with perforated diapers of *jáli* work, and each main leaf is surrounded by a running floreated pattern in which, at regular intervals, occur the best known and most popular figures of the great epics. Within each of the perforated buds which surmount the upper edges of the screen, the workman has cunningly fashioned a human likeness,—a *tour de force* which the photograph fails to reveal.

It is to be hoped that those of our tourist visitors who see the screen at Delhi will mark the gulf which lies between the best Indian wood-carving and the commonplace *tún* work—between the work which takes years of inherited skill to perfect and the machine-made trash hawked on railway platforms.

Whereas the architectural wood-work of Farrukhabad is strictly Muhammadan, both in execution and design, the carved doors of Mainpuri are more typically Hindu than any similar work in the United Provinces. It is strange that the extreme examples of the two divergent influences should be found in adjacent districts. The explanation probably lies in the fact that the Mainpuri artisans are descended from a family of craftsmen who originally migrated from Rájputána, and that they have clung to their traditions more tenaciously than the neighbouring Hindu *barhais*.

If all Indian wood-carving were like that of Mainpuri, Sir George Birdwood's remarks on the universal religious significance of the carved wood-work on Indian houses would be literally true.

The carved *chaukats* of Mainpuri, few as they are, contain the figures of all the best-known heroes of the Rámáyana and Mahábhárata.

Yet, through all this bold expression of Hindu feeling, and notwithstanding the Hindu trabeated arch, the working of Muhammadan influence is clearly apparent. There is not a trace of the riotous profusion nor of the deep under-cutting which marks pure Hindu work. The design is cold and symmetrical. Each figure is excluded from the general ornamentation by a rectangular frame, and the panels of the doorway are filled in with Muhammadan geometric designs.

Nowadays there is no wood-carving done in Mainpuri except in connection with the *tárkashi* work described below.

CHAPTER VII.

Miscellaneous.

AN account of the wood-carving of the United Provinces would be incomplete without some mention of Burmese carving. A stranger might have some difficulty in accounting for its abundance in the houses of Europeans. The industry is of course not indigenous, being circumscribed by the limits of the central jails. A great number of Burmese prisoners were allotted to these Provinces after the close of the Burmese war, and their skill in wood-carving has been turned to good account. Of late years their numbers have greatly decreased and the quality of the work has rapidly deteriorated, so much so that good work of this kind is not now obtainable. These jail-carvings, mostly in the form of screens, chairs, picture-frames, and overmantels, show all the characteristics of Burmese art, being extravagant in design and marked by bold under-cutting.

Burmese carving.

This transplanted craft has had no effect on indigenous industry. Here there is no danger of re-action. The once untrammelled imagination

of the Hindu artisan is effectually curbed by the stern principles of Muhammadan art.

Thappa carving.

Cloth printing is a considerable industry in the Provinces, among the chief centres being Farrukhabad, Lucknow, and Tánda in the Fyzabad district.

There is a distinct class of carpenters who earn their living by supplying the cloth-printers *(chhipis)* with the necessary dies *(thappas)*. These dies are made of *shisham*, mango, and ebony and are often of delicate and skilful workmanship. The designs are given by the *chhipis* to the die-cutters, and the latter, after chalking the surface of the blocks, reproduce the designs by marks made with an iron pen. The pattern is then chiselled into relief. The die-cutter escapes one of the main difficulties of ordinary wood-carving through being able to neglect his background, provided he leaves the pattern standing out clearly. Moreover, it must be remembered that the usual intricate pattern of a given space is not carved entirely on a single block. A separate block is used for the application of each colour: a single block contains only a portion of the design.

The remuneration of die-cutters is regulated by the class of die cut. In discussing the Lucknow industry Mr. Hoey gives the following figures :—

1. *Bel hâshiya* for flowered borders, so cut that it can be used continuously ... ... 4 as. per die.
2. *Bel buti* (single flowers impressed by one stamp of the die) ... ... „ „
3. *Bel haazi*, flowered stripes used to print in long diagonal or transverse lines: also cut to be used continuously, 8 to 12 as. per die.
4. *Tahrir* (letters and quotations, also pictures and figures, requiring use of successive dies) ... Rs. 2 to Rs. 4 per set of dies.

The following details of the Tánda trade are supplied by the Tahsíldár. *Thappas* cost from two annas to five rupees :—

	Rs.	a.	p.
1. *Kalunga* (containing 18 flowers) costs	1	3	0

		Rs.	a.	p.
2.	*Gulkat*	0	10	0
3.	*Siah Karwa Gulkat*	1	3	0
4.	*Khatri Pardedár*	1	4	0
6.	*Patti Ari*	1	0	0
7.	*Ekka Rekhta*	5	0	0
8.	*Jhár*	1	0	0

The blocks are all rectangular in form, and with the exception of *jhár* which always measures nine inches by five, they vary from three by two to six by four.

A skilled die-cutter earns about eight annas a day. The Sadhs in Farrukhabad employ very few die-cutters, most of their blocks being imported from Lucknow. A few Hindu carpenters earn their living by *thappa* carving, and recently some Panjábi *tarkhans* have been introduced. The Farrukhabad cloth printers have lately taken to the use of brass dies, and this innovation may eventually lead to the extinction of the old craft.

Both European and native designs are used in cloth-printing, and they are easily distinguished. The development of the Tánda trade was largely due to English supervision. In the eighteenth century a Mr. Scott maintained a large *kárkhána*, and he was succeeded by Messrs. Orr and Johannes, who both helped to improve the designs. Mr. Orr especially was a great reformer. He is said to have been a paymaster in the British service, and the name of "Bakshi Orr" is still remembered. He died in 1832, a rich man and the owner of a large mansion.

Inlay work.

Inlay work is one of the chief Muhammadan arts. It was introduced into India through the Mughals, and the inlay work of Agra has its European parallel in the Moorish Alhambra.

The art is not extensively practised in these Provinces. The *pichhakari* work of Nagína is only subsidiary to the ordinary ebony carving; but there is a constant outturn of *kalamdáns* and screens inlaid

with ivory and occasionally with silver, though the design is never intricate, consisting mainly of narrow rectangular strips.

A new form of inlay was recently introduced in Saháranpur through the influence of a European resident. This consists of floral designs of brass, copper, and German silver worked out on plain *shisham*. It is occasionally applied to picture-frames and caskets, but is best adapted to large lily-patterns inlaid on plain panels. The best specimens of this kind of work are to be found above the altar in Saháranpur Church. A few panels appear in the photograph of the Saháranpur *tún*-work *kárkhána*.

Of other kinds of inlay applied to wood, Mainpuri *tárkashi* or "wire-drawing" is the best known in these Provinces.

The art is in the hands of a Hindu family of *quasi*-Bráhmanical pretensions, whose forefathers migrated from Rájputána in the train of a Chauhán chief in the fourteenth century and settled at Mainpuri. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, as the result of an insult offered to their caste, they migrated to Kurauli, fourteen miles away; but two generations later they returned to Mainpuri. It is not known how long they had been acquainted with the art of *tárkashi*. Possibly it had been practised by their ancestors in Rájputána. It now became their speciality, and Mr. Growse found a small, but thriving, community of wire-drawers at Mainpuri in 1864. The "Indian Art Journal" contains a long historical and descriptive account of the art written by him. After the advent of Mr. Growse, rapid development ensued. The art was no longer limited—as formerly—to wooden clogs *(kharauns)*, caskets, and pen-boxes, but was drawn into a European connection.

Latterly the trade has begun to languish and would probably disappear but for the fact that the chief workman is subsidized by Government. However, a great effort is being made to send a representative collection of *tárkashi* work to the Delhi Exhibition; and it is hoped that a fresh impetus will be given to this ancient and unique

art industry, which is capable of adapting itself so readily to the European market.

The first part of the process of *tárkashi* consists of drawing the design in pencil on well-seasoned *shisham*. The lines are then deeply incised with a sharp knife, and into this brass wire is drawn and beaten down level with the surface of the wood with an iron hammer. The process requires considerable time and labour. A plate of twelve inches diameter will occupy a workman for twenty days. The best workmen make a profit of Rs. 20 per mensem, and the other from Rs. 10 to Rs. 15.

The dots that diversify the design and soon run up to thousands in a space of only a few inches square, are minute coils of wire twisted up on the point of a needle.

Nimble fingers and sharp eyes are required for this sort of work, and it is usually done by boys who sit by their father's side and manipulate the tiny circles of wire with marvellous dexterity.

Strictly speaking, *tárkashi* hardly falls within the scope of this monograph; but it is distinctly a wood-carvers' art, and goes hand-in-hand with wood-carving. The wire inlay and the carving of a bracket or frame are usually the work of one pair of hands: in fact the Mainpuri wire-drawers are among the best wood-carvers in Northern India. They are responsible for all the carved doors in Mainpuri; and in Bulandshahr Town Hall and Lucknow Museum their skill is represented by doors in which carving and *tárkashi* are skilfully combined.

The chief patterns employed by *tárkashi* workers are based on *badrum* or *bandrum*, a very ancient design of symmetrically curving lines, which has a great fascination for all Indian art-workers.

No pattern is more common in *daris* and *farash* of all kinds, and it is a great favourite among cloth-printers. It has already been mentioned as occurring frequently in *chaukat* carving; and an example of it occurs in the panel leaning against the corner of the jamb in the left-hand side of the picture taken in the verandah, Saháranpur Town Hall.

It would be difficult to say definitely whether this pattern is of Hindu or Muhammadan origin; but the apparent connection with the *gumbaz* or dome, which is very clearly brought out in the more intricate variations, would indicate the latter as the more probable.

CHAPTER VIII.

Conclusion.

"OF late years the handicraftsmen, who for all the marvellous tissues and embroidery they have brought have polluted no rivers, "deformed no pleasing prospects, nor poisoned any air; whose skill and "individuality the training of countless generations has developed to the "highest perfection; these hereditary handicraftsmen are being every-"where gathered from their democratic village communities into colossal "mills, to drudge in gangs at manufacturing piece-goods, in the produc-"tion of which they are no more intellectually and morally concerned "than the grinder of a barrel-organ in the tunes turned out from it"—(Sir George Birdwood).

It remains to be seen whether the combined force of all the destructive influences now at work will eventually prove fatal to the indigenous arts of India.

That Government is alive to their evil plight is evident from the eagerness with which it greets every scheme calculated to arrest the decline. Exhibitions, Museums of Industry, Industrial Schools, Art Magazines—all bear witness to a practical sympathy which meets with scant response.

The failure of these schemes is no doubt largely due to the fact that they aim at affecting supply and do not encourage demand.

Among the measures adopted with a view to bringing about a revival in the art of wood-carving was the establishment of a special class at the Thomason College, Roorkee. Among those who have taken the course and received the certificate of proficiency, there is not one

recorded instance of a man who took up wood-carving as a means of livelihood after leaving Roorkee.

Apart from the economic point of view, it appears questionable whether Industrial Schools are really adapted to effect the purpose for which they are established,—whether they are not out of keeping with the traditions of Indian art.

Mr. Growse evidently disapproved of such institutions. "If the "students have no natural artistic faculty, an artificial semblance of it "can be created; but if they have it by birth, it runs a great risk of being "strangled and crushed . . . . . For the revival of art in India it "is not schools that are required, but personal interest on the part "of the European community, judicious patronage, and permanent "employment."

"We incur," says Sir George Birdwood, "a great responsibility in "attempting to interfere in the direct art education of a people who "already possess the tradition of a system of decoration, founded on "perfect principles, which they have learned through centuries of "practice to apply with unerring truth."

In other words, find the workmen a market and let them alone. If only impetus could be given to demand, indigenous arts would soon reappear in all their ancient splendour.

Where is this demand to come from? It is obvious that the fate of the Indian arts lies in the hands of the wealthy natives of India. According as native taste is pure or perverse, native arts will wax or wane.

This is especially true in the case of wood-carving. The conditions of European life out here are such that the collection of the more cumbrous kind of art treasures can be the hobby of only a privileged minority. Owing to frequent transfer and occasional furlough, the majority do not and cannot take furniture seriously.

Those few who have been able to retain *mistris* in their compound, and have encouraged them to work in their traditional style, have done

a service to the art of wood-carving which will be apparent when the day of revival comes. The Appendix contains a picture of a corner of Mr. H. Nelson Wright's compound in Allahabad where *qaida* and tradition are respected, and where the *mistri* is teaching his son as he himself was taught.

But such cases are rare. The real basis of all Indian art industries is the support given by native *raises* and *mahájans*. If their patronage cannot be revived the doom of Indian arts is sealed.

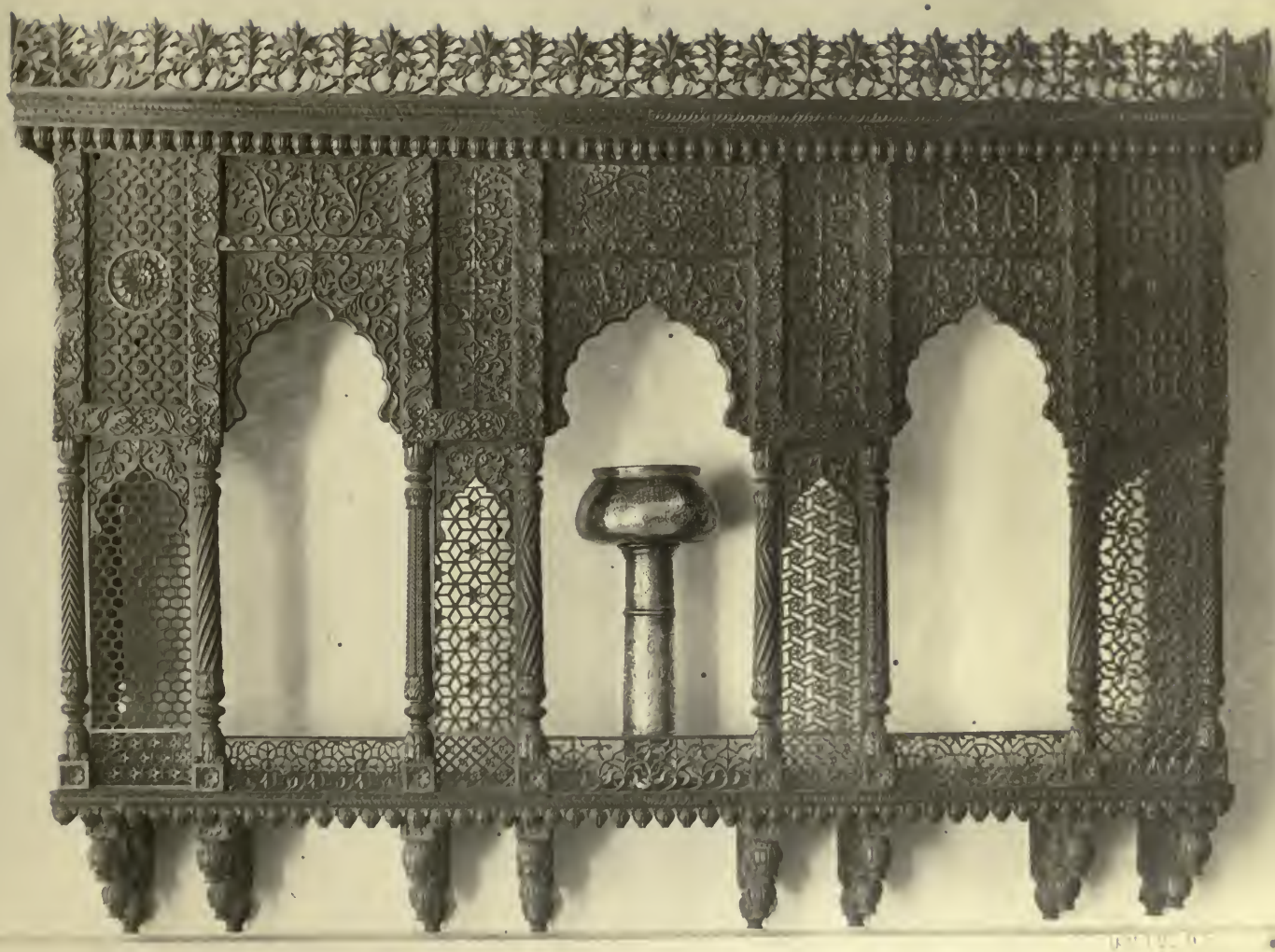
From the *Ain-i-Akbari*, written by Akbar's great Minister, we learn that the Mughal Emperors of Delhi maintained in their palaces skilled workmen from every part of India. Akbar had in his service a great number of artists, in order that they might "vie with each other in fame and become eminent by their productions."

A gloomy contrast to this is the picture drawn by Dr. Watt, Director of the Exhibition of Indian Arts to be held in Delhi :—

"It is not the Indian Princes alone who have false ideals, though they are most to blame, and do most harm perhaps. The whole of India is running after false idols in art, and neglecting and ruining its splendid indigenous industries. Some day,—it will not be for another century, it may not be for two,—a reaction will come. The people of India will demand indigenous work, indigenous art; and when that day arrives, if the decadence that is now taking place continues, Indian art, Indian thought and feeling, will be dead. It is dying now, and all we can hope to do is to keep it alive till the day of revival comes."

"The art of a country is evolved slowly from its religious and national thought subject to certain eternal laws, even though the early artists were ignorant of the existence of these laws, and must be evolved along the national lines. If it be not so evolved it will decay and die, and with it will perish the nation's power of expression and reproduction. Indian art has ceased to advance along Indian lines. The whole nation is becoming one of futile copyists."

It is to be hoped that the Delhi Exhibition will achieve its educative purpose,—the "education" of the princes and potentates of India. No satisfactory revival will take place until the indiscriminating craze for European fashions has been checked and native taste has been "re-Indianized."



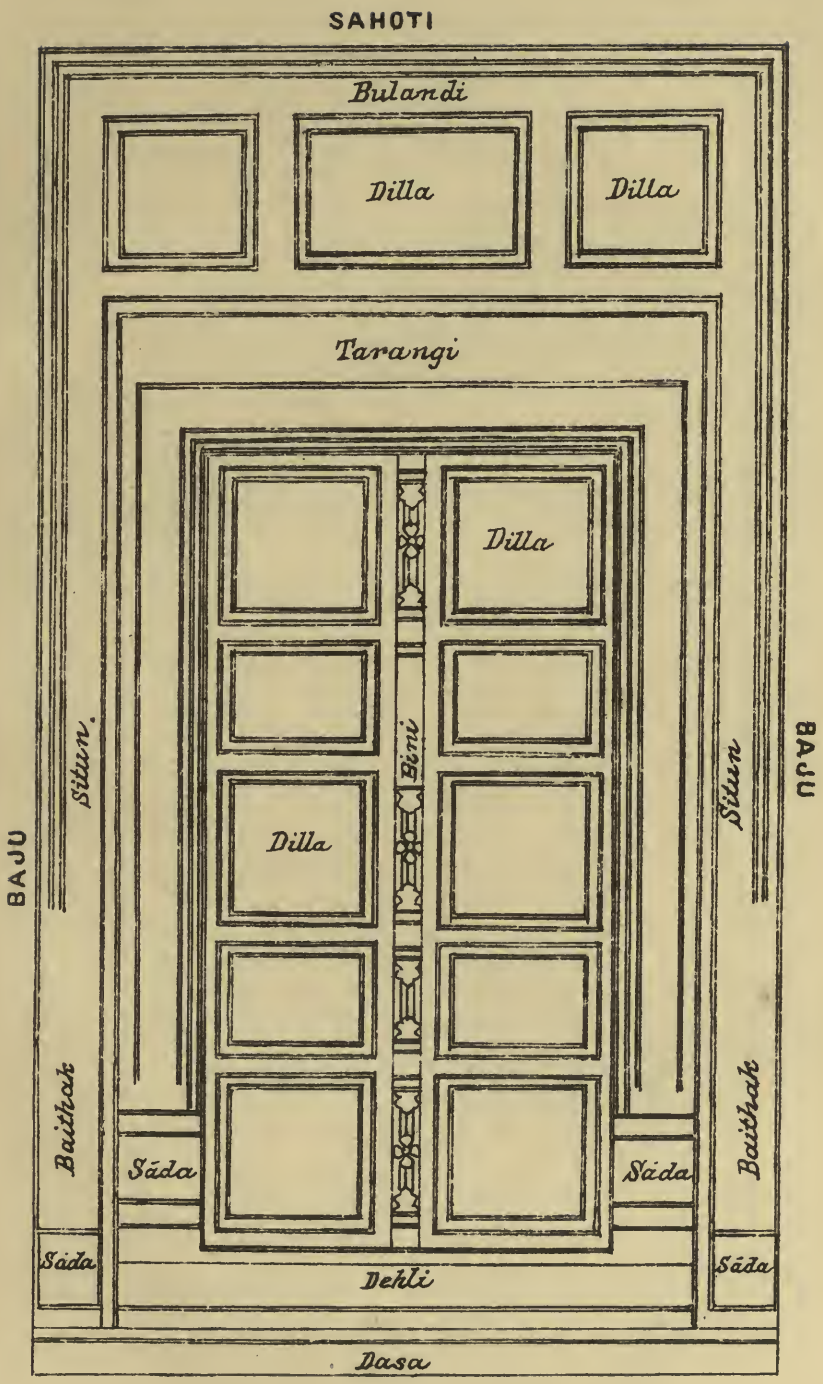


PLATE I.—CHAUKAT *and* JORI KIWĀR

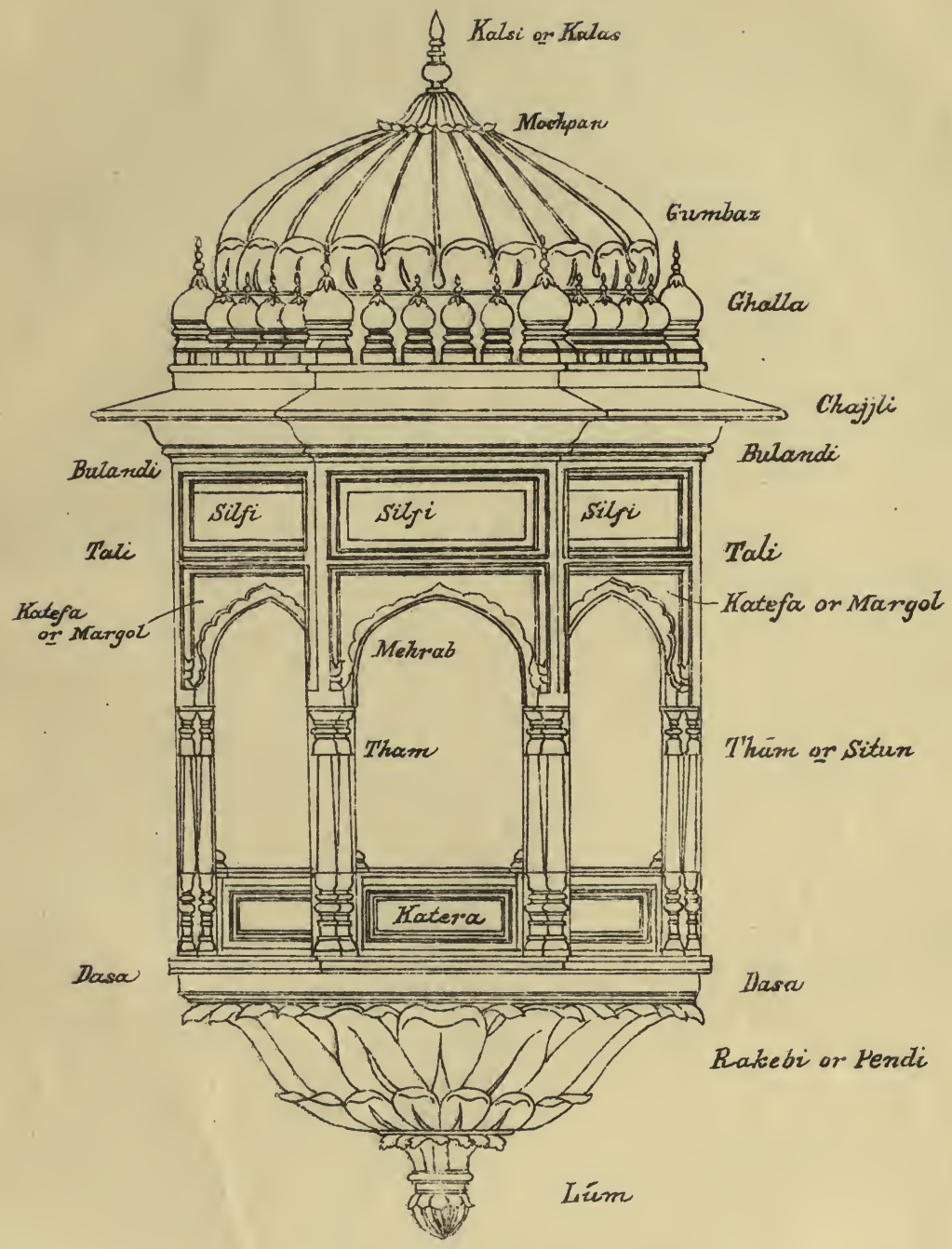


PLATE 2.— BUKHARCHA & JAGMOHAN
(Jagmohan extend from Kalsi to Dasa)

Plate 3.—Tūn Carving and Brass inlay, Saharanpur.

Plate 4.—Old Door, Saharanpur.

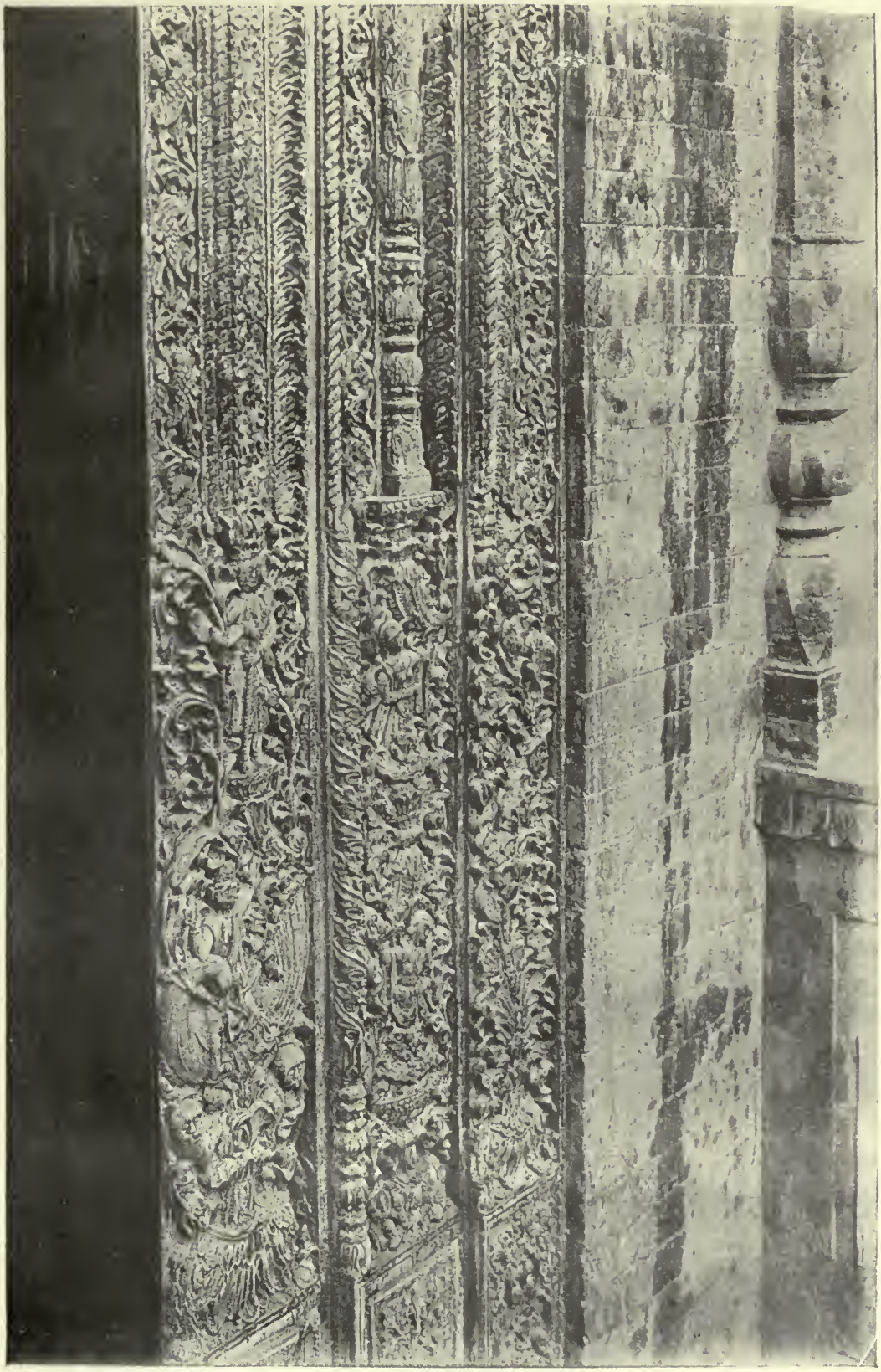


Plate 5.—Detail of Sitūn, Baithak, and Sāda, Old Door, Saharanpur.

Plate 6.—Saharanpur Mistris Carving a door for the Delhi Art Exhibition.

Plate 7.—Nagina "Ebony" carving.

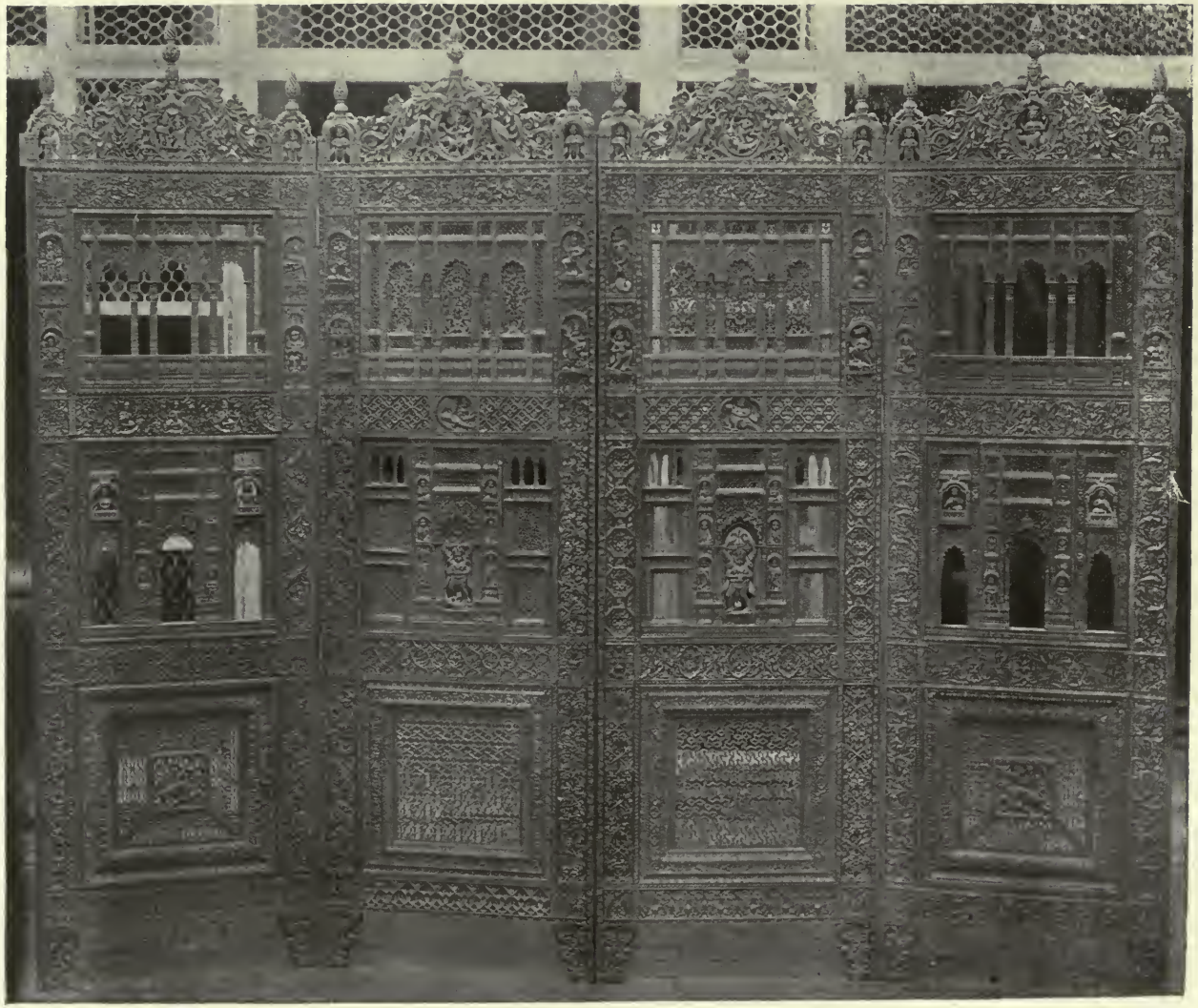


Plate 8.—Shisham wood screen, Farrukhabad.

Plate 9.—Mr. H. Nelson Wright's workmen, Allahabad.

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